

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

The paragraph beginning at page 4, line 21 is amended as follows:

For many businesses, the optimal revenue forecast is achieved by having the sales and marketing organizations agree upon an “official” or “consensus” revenue forecast. This consensus-generation practice (as opposed to taking just one forecast or the other, or by allowing separate forecasts to remain divergent) is often superior for two reasons. First, the process of achieving consensus forces constituents to reveal information and state implicit assumptions, resulting in a more informed forecast. Second, expenses must be driven off a coherent pro forma (forecast) profit and loss (P&L) statement. If managers in the company are spending based on divergent P&L forecasts, then the business organization’s resources may not be coherently aligned towards an objective. Because the sales and marketing organizations often forecast slightly different ways, e.g., sales, forecasts all products in a given region while marketing forecasts all regions for given product, and because often the sales and marketing organizations are hierarchically deep and may only come together at the chief executive officer (CEO) level, getting the sales and marketing organizations to agree on ~~an official revenue forecast in timely manner~~ official revenue forecast in a timely manner is a huge organizational challenge.

The paragraph beginning at page 6, line 13 is amended as follows:

Business organizations use a variety of systems and mechanisms to manage forecast data. One approach involves the use of spreadsheet-based solutions. Spreadsheet-based solutions generally involve the use of a patchwork of spreadsheets that are communicated between personnel via e-mail. Forecasts are generated in spreadsheets and ~~are subsequently e-mailed to up each level of the respective~~ are subsequently e-mailed to each level of the respective organizational hierarchies for review. Ultimately, a set of top-level spreadsheets are e-mailed to FP&A personnel in order to produce the Flash process forecasts or organize the consensus

meeting for the Outlook process forecasts. The output of both processes is usually a set of spreadsheets that is e-mailed to various personnel within the business organization. Spreadsheet-based solutions are popular because spreadsheet application software is readily available, is inexpensive, is generally very flexible and is relatively easy to learn and use.

The paragraph beginning at page 31, line 7 is amended as follows:

FIG. 6A is a block diagram 600 that depicts the flow of information into a consensus environment. Forecast data from a sales organization forecast rollup 602 (rolled up along a customer data hierarchy) 602 and a marketing organization forecast rollup 604 (rolled up along a product data hierarchy) 604 is provided to a consensus environment 606. In this example, sales organization forecast rollup 602 is rolled up along customer data hierarchy 350 and marketing organization forecast rollup 604 is rolled up along product data hierarchy 604 450.

The paragraph beginning at page 32 line 6 is amended as follows:

FIG. 6B is a block diagram 610 that depicts a set of two-dimensional matrices 612, 614, 616, 618 where each matrix contains forecast data for a specified period of time. For example, matrices 612, 614, 616, 618 may contain forecast data for the first four fiscal quarters (Q1-Q4) of a fiscal year. In the present example, ~~the forecast data in each matrix 602, 604, 606, 608 the forecast data in each matrix 612, 614, 616, 618~~ is organized by a certain level of product and customer dimensionality, namely, product line and country. Each perspective (sales, marketing, or consensus) may be organized similarly. Matrices 612, 614, 616, 618 may be organized by other attributes, depending upon the requirements of a particular application.

The paragraph beginning at page 41 line 22 is amended as follows:

Data held Matrix data is planning data. It represents bookings or revenue forecast data for a node. There are two planning semantics supported by the application: bookings and revenue. There are three planning types supported by the application: total, price, and unit

volume. These types enforce the triangular constraint (Price*Volume=Total). Given this constraint, the application is not required to store all three types in the database (~~two is two are~~ sufficient to maintain the constraint). Finally, there are two states for data: plan or actuals. Plan data is actively maintained by the application. Actuals data is imported from the ERP system and is read-only. Given these semantics, types, and states, a given user can potentially access 12 ($2 \times 3 \times 2$) different matrices. The unit volume matrix represents unit volumes as floating point numbers. The bookings and price matrices represent prices in the currently of the planning node as floating point numbers.